

forming a reliability-enhancing layer positioned with respect to the defect source to reduce defect-induced degradation of one or more VCSEL regions, wherein the defect source creates a concentration gradient inducing defect migration, and the reliability-enhancing layer is configured to reduce the induced defect migration.

**Conclusion**

If the Examiner has any further questions or would like to discuss this application in more detail, he is invited to call the applicants' agent at the telephone number given below. The applicants respectfully suggest that the claims presently in the application are distinct over the prior art and that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, the applicants solicit favorable action.

Respectfully submitted,  
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**July 14, 2003**  
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